

Introduction



Perspectives on U.S. Intelligence





The role of intelligence agencies in the planning, conduct, and evaluation of U.S. foreign policy has been of consummate public interest since the congressional investigations and CIA shakeups of the mid-1970s. For over a decade, ever since the Church and Pike Committee reports stirred almost obsessive media interest in the real or alleged deeds (and purported misdeeds) of the agency, Congress and the American people have focused an extraordinary amount of attention—possibly too much so—upon the nature and functioning of the U.S. intelligence community. No other country, whether democratic or dictatorial, has put on public record such a thoroughly described portrait of its intelligence activities.

Recent legislative and press debates concerning the existence and extent of the U.S. government's covert support for various Central American groups have only accented the intelligence-watching dimension of our society. The pursuit of information has become, for better or worse, a national pastime. Often, in that quest, the assessment of substantive changes within the American intelligence world has been slighted. Even before Central America revived public attention, *The Washington Quarterly* undertook the following cluster of articles which provide widely-varying perspectives and

judgements on the character of American intelligence in the 1980s.

Senator Barry Goldwater, chairman of the Senate's intelligence oversight committee, provides a description and defense both of that group's activities and of the oversight function generally. A far more skeptical and critical assessment of intelligence oversight emerges in the analysis by Anne Karalekas, who began her scrutiny of the subject while working for the Church Committee. One of the country's leading students and scholars of intelligence, Angelo Codevilla, a staff member of the Senate intelligence committee, argues that the reforms of the 1970s have made the task of honest intelligence analysts, seeking to insulate their judgements from political pressures and considerations, far more difficult. Richard Brody's subtle exploration of the limits of warning during pre-crisis moments suggests the difficulties confronted by intelligence evaluation at all such moments, no matter what the political context or measure of oversight. The cross-section of attitudes and approaches reflected in these four articles should provide the reader with a useful introduction to many critical issues in the debate over the role of American intelligence that undoubtedly will continue to rage unabated in our time.

The Editors